

hypothesis could be tested by additional studies in minimally disturbed areas such as the remote sections of Cockpits Country.

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## Subspeciation in *Anthus brachyurus* Sundevall, 1850

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The small-sized Afrotropical Short-tailed Pipit *Anthus brachyurus* Sundevall, described from the upper Umlaas R., Natal, on material collected by the Swedish explorer/naturalist J. A. Wahlberg, ranges locally from Natal and Zululand, the Transvaal and Mozambique north to Malaŵi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, southern and eastern Zaïre, Angola, Congo-Brazzaville and southern Gabon. The species affects moist short grasslands, breeding down to near sea level in the southeast of its range in Natal and Zululand, but is in the main a plateau breeder, ranging to as high as 2000 m a.s.l. and above in east-central equatorial Africa. While currently assumed to be largely sedentary, recently assembled evidence suggests that it is only a seasonal breeding visitor to many parts of its range.

Appreciation of the subspecifically important geographical variation in *A. brachyurus* is much influenced by the constraints of grass induced abrasion and solar colour modification, the majority of skins in museum collections being in worn breeding condition (collected September-February); fresh dress is assumed April-July. Currently 2 subspecies are recognised: nominate *A. brachyurus* over most of the species' range; and *A. b. leggei* Ogilvie-Grant, 1906: Mokia, SE Ruwenzori Range, of western Uganda and immediately adjacent eastern Zaïre (cf. White 1960: 156). Later, however, White (1961: 80) repudiated his earlier acceptance of the discreteness of *leggei*.

Geographical variation in the Short-tailed Pipit affects the colour of the upper-parts and the intensity of the streaking, the colour of the wings, the extent and degree of the lower fore-throat and breast striations and the colouration of the ventral ground. There appears to be little variation of moment in size, that detected being largely the result of the wearing down of wing-tips in breeding birds, which is particularly noticeable in females.

A recent study of this species confirms the distinctness of the Ruwenzori population compared with *A. b. brachyurus*, and shows further that the present nominate race of most workers is composite, the equatorial element present in the mid- and lower drainage of the Zaïre (Congo) R., west to southern Gabon representing a third, and at present innominate, race. This is formally described below, together with the other 2 races on the basis of characters to be seen in freshly moulted specimens.

*Anthus brachyurus brachyurus* Sundevall

*Anthus brachyurus* Sundevall, Oefv. K. Sv. Vet.-Akad. Förbandl., vol. vii, 1850, p. 100: "Caffraria, circa Portum", the *Type* from upper Umlaas R., Natal.

*Description.* Dorsal surface dark olive-brown, the feathers edged light olivaceous buff. Below, with ground to lower fore-throat and breast pale yellow or light yellowish buff, closely streaked with blackish brown. Wings with edges to coverts and outer vanes of remiges light olivaceous buff.

*Measurements.* Wings of 10 adult ♂♂, 65–68 (66.9), SD 0.92; of 10 ♀♀, 62.5–64 (63.5), SD 0.64 mm.

*Material examined.* 35 specimens. Natal topotypes of this taxon were collected at the following localities; upper Umlaas R., Durban, Pinetown, Kloof, Richmond, Howick, Giant's Castle Game Reserve, Mkomazi Forest Reserve, Dundee and Isandhlwana.

*Range.* Southern highlands of Tanzania, and, perhaps, northern Malaŵi, and locally in the southeastern highland system of South Africa from the Transvaal to Natal and Zululand. Non-breeding birds, probably of the latter population, have been taken in the Mozambique lowlands to the north of Beira (in the Savane), and recorded from the lower Limpopo R. flood-plain, and taken on migration once in Zimbabwe (9 November 1981, at Beitbridge at 22°10'S, 29°40'E). One or two specimens of a worn sample from Salujinga, northwestern Zambia, at 10°58'S, 24°07'E, appear attributable to this taxon, but others from northern Zambia lie closer to the Zaïre basin form. The Salujinga specimens are dated late September and early October. A longer series in fresh plumage will be required to sort out possible non-breeding visitors from local residents in Zambia. Occurs on the South African breeding grounds October to early April.

*Anthus brachyurus eludens*, subsp. nov.

*Type:* ♀, adult. Breeding. Petianga (Pebeangu), Kasai Occidental, Zaïre, at 04°26'S, 20°55'E (co-ordinates on specimen label given as 04°04'S, 20°08'E), 4 November 1933. Collected by Rear-Admiral Hubert Lynes. In the collection of the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium. Mus. Reg. No. 28 288.

In fresh dress *eludens* is more uniform above than nominate *brachyurus* resulting from the browner, less light olivaceous buff, fringes to the feathers. In the wings, the coverts and outer vanes of the remiges are redder – about dull

snuff brown *versus* light olivaceous buff. Streaking on lower fore-throat and breast finer, ventral ground yellower. Similar in size to the nominate.

*Material examined.* 23 specimens. Paratypes were from the following localities: Kasai, Zaïre: Kananga (Luluabourg), Kunungu (02°05'S, 16°24'E). Petianga (Pebeangu), Madi, headwaters of the Lubue and Loana Rivers (05°06'S, 19°06'E), and Camma R. (02°31'S, 09°46'E).

*Range.* The southern drainage fan of the Zaïre R., from Shaba and Kasai Occidental, Zaïre, west to Lunda, northern Angola, Congo-Brazzaville (at Djambala) and Gabon. The birds breeding along the Zaïre/Zambesi watershed in northern Zambia may be attributable to this race.

*Measurements of the Type.* Wing 59+, culmen from base 12, tail 34 mm.

*Remarks.* The Type selected was a bird which had just laid and is in somewhat worn dress, and was chosen in order firmly to attach the name *eludens* to an established breeding population.

*Anthus brachyurus leggei* Ogilvie-Grant

*Anthus leggei* Ogilvie-Grant, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.*, vol. xix, 1906, p. 26: Mokia, SE Ruwenzori Range, western Uganda.

Blacker, less buffish or olivaceous tinged above, with heavier shaft-streaks, than nominate *brachyurus* in freshly moulted condition. Below, the ground of the lower fore-throat and breast pale vinaceous rather than yellowish, the streaking over the breast much heavier and more diffuse; rest of venter whiter. Size ranging a little smaller than nominate.

*Measurements (mm).* Wings of 5 ♂♂, 63.5–65 (64.7), SD 0.67; wings of 3 ♀♀, 61.5–63.5 (62.3), SD 1.04.

*Material examined.* 10 specimens. Uganda:- "Uganda", Mokia, Ruwenzori Mtns; Zaïre:- Bokalakala (02°05'S, 16°24'E).

*Range.* Lower aspects of the Ruwenzoris in Toro, Uganda, at 1800–2000 m a.s.l. (Britton 1980: 175). Specimens from Ankole, Uganda (Gaisimairi) taken in February are not *leggei*, but are too worn to determine subspecifically. A singleton of a series taken at Bokalakala, in Kasai Occidental, in the second half of August, is attributable to *leggei* on the basis of the very heavy pectoral streaking, the balance of the sample being more like *eludens*.

*Remarks.* The Type in the collection of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring, B.M. Reg. No, 1906. 12.23.506, examined.

The heavy black, somewhat diffuse, pectoral streaking in this taxon resembles the character state in the juvenile dress of the nominate subspecies.

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